

At the request of the Occupational and Professional Licensure Review Committee, DWS submits the following information regarding the certifications and permits it issues (35A-13-6). The department believes all certifications and permits it issues are essential to preserve the health and safety of the public.

| American Sign Language Interpreter Certification or Permit Name | Current Number of Licensees | Average Number of Certifications Issued Annually |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| Certifications | | |
| Novice Interpreter Certification | 104 | 39 |
| Master Interpreter Certification | 13 | (No longer offered, but certification is still recognized) |
| Professional Interpreter Certification | 236 | 27 |
| Certified Deaf Interpreter | 13 | (Testing suspended – will reopen soon) |
| Permits | | |
| Student Permit | 20 | 21 |
| Employer Permit (Mentored Permit) | 0 | 1 |
| Employee Permit (Emergency Permit) | 1 | 1 |
| Recognition of Other Certifications | | |
| Recognition of National-Level Certification | 215 | 5 |
| Recognition of Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment | 67 | 6 |

Occupational and Professional Licensure Review Committee Meeting

Overview of ASL Interpreter Certifications and Permits

Since the creation of statute over 20 years ago, the Division of Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) has been statutorily responsible for administering Interpreter Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (35A-13-6). Interpreter Services is defined as facilitating effective communication utilizing American Sign Language (ASL).

Overview of Each Certification

Novice Certification

Certification for an individual who has demonstrated entry-level skills, knowledge, and judgment to be able to facilitate communication in a variety of situations, excluding more complex, technical, or specialized situations. Interpreters certified at the Novice level must advance to Professional Certification within four years and complete yearly continuing education hours.

Master and Professional Certification

Certification for an individual who has demonstrated the skills, knowledge, and judgment to be able to facilitate communication in most any situation, including more complex, technical, or specialized situations. The certification is valid up to 4 years and requires a minimum number of continuing education hours annually. (The Master Certification is no longer offered but still recognized).

Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI)

Certification for a deaf individual that has certification from Registry for Interpreters of the Deaf (RID) and have demonstrated native or near native fluency in ASL and understanding of Deaf Culture. This is a Professional level certification. It is valid for up to 4 years and requires a minimum number of continuing education hours annually.

Student Permit

A permit where an individual is providing paid or unpaid interpreting services while in a training program, internship, residency, apprenticeship, or on-the-job training program. Students are not to work alone and must work with a Certified Professional Interpreter. The permit is issued for a defined period of time based on each term/semester the student is interpreting through an internship or practicum.

Employer Permit (Mentored Permit)

A permit for a specific employee of a company where there are no certified interpreters available and the lack of a certified interpreter may jeopardize compliance with state or federal law, such as Equal Opportunity or Americans with Disability Act. An individual may be certified for up to one year.

Employee Permit (Emergency Permit)

A permit where an individual is certified in another state and wishes to relocate to Utah, but has not had the opportunity to take the Utah certification exam. The permit is valid for up to 4 months.

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Certification

Recognition of certification from RID, the national certifying body of ASL interpreters. The individual is not required to pass the Utah test, but will be listed on the Utah website as a certified interpreter.

EIPA

Recognition of certification from the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA).
Individuals can only interpret in elementary and secondary schools.

Statutory Requirements

USOR believes these regulatory requirements should remain as is at a minimum. Without certification, there is no way to know if the individual is able to correctly interpret. The deaf or hard of hearing client may not get full detail on what is happening in the conversation. This lack of interpreter skill may seem small in settings such as conferences or everyday life, but become more important in job interviews and school and can be deadly in cases of physician appointments or counseling sessions.

If there were an opportunity to tighten regulations, USOR feels it would be around enforcement of these regulations. If an individual operates as an interpreter without being certified, there is no recourse that can be taken by the department or any other entity. DSDHH would like to see enforcement language added to the statute, or to another agency's statute to ensure that interpreters are certified and able to meet the needs of the Deaf Community.

National Organization or Federal Law Impacted

There are several federal laws that provide the framework for interpreter services. These include: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA PL 108-446), Every Student Succeeds Act (PL 114-95), Americans with Disabilities Act (PL 110-325), etc. However, there are no specific federal laws that require an interpreter be certified by the state in order to provide interpretation services. The laws only require that an interpreter be "qualified".

The national organization, Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) plays an active role in supporting the Deaf Community, tracking legislation and advocates for regulations protecting the Deaf Community, in all 50 states. If changes are proposed to the Utah statute, members in RID will post them on their website and encourage their members to voice their support or dissent.

One last note, several other states recognize Utah certified interpreters and do not require them to retest and relicense in their state. If changes are made to the statute, that may impact other states.